

THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS.

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As we step into the arena—not as the gladiator enters to slay somebody—but as an American citizen, a Christian, we want to know something about our political relation to the world. Where does the Christian man stand politically? or does he not stand at all? Is he simply lying at the feet of political shyllocks, praying only that the streams of political corruption may be dammed up, or dammed down, and not helping to build the dam? Does not every man owe something to the grand and glorious government under which we live in the way of aiding in the cleaning out of the Augean stables and purifying the political cess-pools, that the laws of government, under which we live, may be good and wholesome? Up comes a good, sanctimonious brother and answers: "No, sir," the Christian should take no part or lot in politics! It's wrong; yea, verily wrong! Yet he is enjoined to be subject to the powers that be, for they are ordained of God. Now it seems passingly strange to us that we are to be subject to the "powers that be," and then take no part nor lot as to who shall constitute the "powers that be." Now suppose that not a Christian man goes to the polls, and the suffrage is only within the hands of the vile, what, in all probability, would be the result? The *rabble* would become the "powers that be," and the Christian would have only to content himself and submit to the "powers that be," and try to make himself believe that those "powers that be" were ordained of God. Such an argument in our estimation falls as flat as a wet rope. What is the result to-day of stay-at-home voters? A noble privilege has been surrendered, the rabble rule in this country, and many offices filled with men whose moral rottenness permeates the very political atmosphere in which we live, and then we talk of such "powers that be," "ordained of God."

For this I hold the Christian people as much responsible for the sins of omission as the worst classes for their sins of commission. You will notice, if you are at all observant, that those Christians who do not exercise their rights of suffrage for pure government, are

always ready to point out "corruption in politics;" they see it in all its ugliness, they growl and froth at the mouth, and expend their righteous indignation, and anathemas upon the *corrupt* politician, then in the next breath will say—"the powers that be are ordained of God." They say a great deal about getting bad men out of office, but they bark not, neither do they bite.

Then there is a sort of imbecile class, they generally start right as boys and girls, but somehow sink. They look to heaven, but seem incapable of having any thing to do with earthly things. They separate religion from politics and every thing else, and are so narrow that they could drop into the nickel-in-the-slot machine and not half try. It seems to me that the man who is so indifferent in his personal efforts to aid in the purifying, and in the keeping pure, the laws of government, does not measure up to his God given liberty, and to the moral duties devolving upon him as a Christian citizen, when all that is asked is to register and to vote. Are we only gospel glow worms on earth for the purpose of emitting light and growing fat? I like the religion that appreciates the grand and glorious government under which we live, and as its old flag floats over me and protects me in my religion, in my citizenship, in my property and my life; that grants to my children, and the children of the poorest father, a free education and an unsectarian religion, I propose to aid in my suffrage in keeping those laws in tact. *Why* is it that Christians do not vote, but allow the dregs of society to rule? Would not the administration of laws and the enactment of laws be safer in the hands of Christians than in the hands of political heelers?

Another thing.—The preachers should preach politics. In this we do not mean in the narrow sense of Democrat, or Republican, or Populist, or the Greenbacker, or A. P. A., but in the broad sense of cleanliness. If it is not the preacher's prerogative to strike at evil within the political camp as well as elsewhere, then we do not understand the sphere of the preacher. I am well aware that this is not the popular conception. Must people look upon preachers as fit for ex-

hibition at afternoon teas, sewing circles, ladies' aid societies, marriages, funerals, and in short, to stand up in the corner as sort of sanctified bric-a-brac? That there is a good deal of sanctified toadyism about some preachers, we frankly admit, and fill the bill most excellently, sitting in the parlor cross-legged, looking holy and impatient for the big dinner that is preparing. When politics are spoken of they are regarded as good little kittens, whose eyes are not yet opened, and though they sniff the stench that emanates from the political cess-pool, *dare* not speak. Such stuff makes us very tired.

But there is a side of manhood that belongs to the preacher, and sometimes his eyes get wide open and he looks over into the political *Gehena*, and in his manhood draws the divine scalpel, as Christ drew it upon the Pharisee, and thrusts it into the abscess, and then he can stand off and see the corruption run. As an exemplification of this truth we point to Dr. Parkhurst of New York. Though the Dr. may once have been an innocent kitten, yet his eyes become opened and pounced upon the great Tammany tiger; as the result of this, the municipal cess-pool of New York has been cleaned, blood money has ceased to flow into the coffers of the police, and the angel of reform bids fair to settle over the great city. To the manly manhood of Dr. Parkhurst belongs the credit. Was Dr. Parkhurst right? Every intelligent man will answer, Yes. Then if the Dr. was right, why then should not every preacher strike at reform politically? If through the instrumentality of our preacher the great city of New York has been cleansed, what could ten thousand preachers do? Along this line of reasoning then we believe that every Christian man (and woman too,) should array themselves along the line of pure politics, and vote and pray, and pray and vote, vote for men of moral character, and if he should happen to be a good Christian, he's *just* the man to vote for, remembering that the powers that be are ordained of God and not of the devil.

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We should be busy in doing good.